

MEDICAL EXAMINATION GOWN WITH CLOSURE DEVICE

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BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

To maintain dignity, medical examination gowns cover most of the patient's body. They are loose and bulky to allow visualization and access without uncovering more than necessary. But that looseness and openness works against the purposes of providing dignity.

For economy examination gowns are usually disposable. They are made from a few large pieces of paper to fit everyone. They are very bulky and loose. This invention deals with two particular styles.

The full body examination gown (Fig. #1) reaches to about the knees. It has holes for the arms and is completely open in the back. There may be a string to close both sides at the neck.

The other style is the "cape". (Fig. #2) This is worn by women to cover their breasts during mammography and breast examination. It reaches to about mid abdomen. The main feature is that it has a slit down the middle. Each side of the front forms a flap to allow visualization of each breast separately.

The large opening in the back of the examination gown and the slit down the middle of the cape leave the areas on both sides to hang open very loosely. When walking the back

must be held together manually to keep the buttocks from being exposed. The loose hanging flaps in front of the cape must be held together by hand to prevent exposure of the breasts. During mammography this is a problem as there are a few steps in the process and women must wait in public areas while waiting for the next part of the test.

This problem can be solved by adding inexpensive closure devices that can be opened, closed and reopened.

DESCRIPTION AND OPERATION

The new examination gowns are similar to existing gowns and capes. The only difference is the addition of closure devices. To keep the gowns fitting more tightly and securely, the large loose free surfaces may be closed with either adhesive, mechanical or tying closure devices. The most likely areas to apply these devices would be one or two points on the full length gown and the flap areas of the cape. They could be opened for any examination or procedure and reclosed afterward.

The first three types could be added in the medical setting. This would have the advantage of tailoring the closure to the person's body contour and the medical and the needs of the medical procedure.

The first form of mechanical closure device that would be applied in the medical office would be a "double paper clip" The sides of the gown would be held together by sliding

both sides of the gown into both ends of the "double paper clip". It holds the paper gown exactly like a paper clip would. (Fig. #3)

The next form of mechanical closure is a double "alligator clip". (Fig. #4) An alligator clip is opened by squeezing together the opposite end of the closure (Fig. #5) . "Alligator clamps" are generally spring loaded. A double alligator is two alligator clamps attached together by a solid or flexible connector. The alligator clamp holds the sides of the gown together by clamping on to each side. This has the advantage of being very obvious in its purpose and how it works. It would cost more than the "double paper clip".

Another closure devise is adhesive. It consists of two pieces of double-sided tape which are held together. (Fig. #6) One side of each piece of tape has a strong adhesive. (Fig. #7) The other side of each piece has much less adhesive. (Fig. #8) The two pieces are held together at the two light adhesive surfaces or inner surfaces. This light adhesive allows these surfaces to be closed, separated and reclosed again. (Fig. 9) Peel-off strips cover the strong adhesive on the outer surfaces until the device is in position on both pieces of the gown to be held together. The strips are peeled off, placed in proper position between the gown parts. (Fig. #10) The gown is pressed together so the left piece of the gown adheres to the top of the tape and the right piece adheres to the bottom of the tape. The two gown parts which are held together can be easily separated by pulling apart the tape. (Fig.#11) The two sides can be reclosed by resealing the two pieces of tape that are affixed to each side. (Fig. #12)

The next closure device is strings affixed to a small piece of paper with adhesive.

(Fig #13) The strings may be affixed to opposite sides of the closure point by strings attached to strips of paper with adhesive on one side. Or the string form of closure could be cut into the shape of the paper. (Fig. #14)

Another form would be the alligator clip that holds any two flaps together. (Fig. #15)